

MINUTES (Unapproved)
UTAH SOIL CONSERVATION COMMISSION (USCC) MEETING
Regular Meeting, March 5, 2007
St. George, UT

ATTENDANCE

Chairman (Standing USCC Ex-officio):

Leonard M. Blackham, *Commissioner, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food*

Appointed Soil Conservation District (SCD)

Supervisor USCC Members:

Paul Leishman, *Zone 1*

Dee Waldron, *Zone 2*

Alan Brown, *Zone 3 alternate acting for Wendell Stembridge*

Randy Greenhalgh, *Zone 4 alternate acting for Stanley Wood*

Ralph Staheli, *Zone 5*

Ed Bench, *Zone 6*

Bob Barry, *Zone 7*

Appointed SCD Alternate USCC Members:

S. Bruce Karren, *Zone 1 via conference call*

Allen Henrie, *Zone 5*

Jerry Steglich, *Zone 6*

Joe Begay, *Zone 7*

Standing Ex-Officio USCC Members:

Willard "Bill" Rasmussen, *President, Utah Association of Conservation Districts (UACD)*

V. Philip Rasmussen, *UT State University Extension (USU)*

Mike Reichert, *Water Quality Division, Utah Department of Environmental Quality Acting for Walt Baker*

Mike Styler, *Utah Department of Natural Resources (UDNR)*

Conservation Partners Representatives:

Todd Nielson, *Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS-UT), USDA Acting for Sylvia Gillen State Conservationist-Utah*

Bruce Barrett, *Bureau of Land Management, USDI*

Chuck Gay, *USU Extension*

Noelle Cockett, *USU Extension*

Rory Reynolds, *Watershed Program Specialist, Utah Dept of Natural Resources*

Joe Hill, *Chair, Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Committee, USDA*

Gordon Younker, *Executive Vice President UACD*

Conservation Partners Representatives con't

Richard Saunders, *Secretary UACD*

Larry Crist, *U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service*

Richard Wilcox, *State Institutional Trust Lands Agency*

Nels Werner, *Utah Assoc. RC&D Councils*

Lisa Bryant, *USDI Bureau of Land Management*

Thayne Mickelson, *Zone 1 Coordinator, UACD*

Heather Johnson, *Zone 2 Coordinator, UACD*

Ray Loveless, *Zone 3 Coordinator, UACD*

David Pace, *Zone 4 Coordinator, UACD*

Tyce Palmer, *Zone 5 Coordinator, UACD*

Darrell Gillman, *Zone 6 Coordinator, UACD*

Hal Lemon, *Zone 7 Coordinator, UACD*

Jay Tanner, *State Grazing Advisory Board*

Department of Agriculture and Food:

Kyle Stephens, *Deputy Commissioner*

Clair Allen, *Director, Plant Industry Div.*

Bill Hopkin, *Director, Utah Grazing Improvement Program*

K. N. "Jake" Jacobson, *USCC Admin. Officer, Div. C&RM*

Sherie Edginton, *USCC Secretary, Div. C&RM*

Dick Sandberg, *Administrator, Agricultural Loans Section, Div. C&RM*

Roy Gunnell, *Environmental Scientist, Div. C&RM*

Stephen Burningham, *Program Mngr, Plant Industry Division*

Guests:

Kerry Van Dyke, *UACD State Engineer*

Desiree Van Dyke, *UACD Zone 2 Admin.*

Troy Forrest, *UACD Zone 1*

Bill Rigby, *Davis SCD Supervisor*

Mary Erickson, *U.S. Forest Service*

Ron Francis, *NRCS*

Ron Davidson, *NRCS*

A.J. Martinez, *Utah's Watershed restoration Initiative Volunteer*

Ivan Flint, *Utah Water Resources*

Harry Judd, *Utah Water Quality*

Carl Adams, *DEQ, Water Quality*

Harry Campbell, *DEQ, Water Quality*

ABSENT & EXCUSED

Wendell Stemberge, Zone 3 Member, **Stanley Wood**, Zone 4 Member, **Bruce Karren**, **Ben Thurgood**,
Alternate Member Designees

SUMMARY OF COMMISSION ACTIONS

1. The Minutes of the January 24, 2007 USCC meeting approved Page 2
2. Accept the Proposed UCC FY08 Budget Page 4
3. Approve Statewide TA Grant for Nature High Camp Page 4
4. Accept Executive Committee Recommendations for TA Grant Program Page 4
5. Approve 2008 SCD Supervisor Election Dates Set Page 4
6. A motion was made by Mr. Bill Rasmussen to adjourn Page 5

USCC MEETING - CALL TO ORDER

Utah Dept. of Agriculture & Food (UDAF) Commissioner Leonard M. Blackham, Utah Soil Conservation Commission (USCC) Chairman, called the meeting to order at 12:31 P.M.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 2006 MEETING MINUTES

Chairman Blackham indicated that copies of the January 24, 2007 USCC meeting minutes draft were distributed with the meeting notice. He asked for action on these minutes. **The motion was made by Mr. Phil Rasmussen to approve the January 24, 2007 USCC meeting minutes as distributed, seconded by Mr. Bill Rasmussen. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

2007 LAND & WATER REINVESTMENT LEGISLATION RESULT

Commissioner Blackham reported that the legislature passed the revised bill now called the Utah Land & Water Reinvestment Act that appropriated FY08 funding: \$2 million ongoing to UDAF for on the ground GIP projects; \$2 million ongoing to UDNr for Watershed Restoration projects; and, \$2 mill. one-time to the Lee Ray McAllister fund for critical lands conservation projects.

2007 LEGISLATION BILL CHANGING COMMISSION & SCD NAMES, ADDING MORE COMMISSION MEMBERS and APPROPRIATING FUNDS FOR UACD & CDs

Commissioner Blackham reported that the legislature passed a bill that amended several parts of the agricultural laws most of which to take affect 60 days after the Governor's signature. The name of this Commission was changed to Utah Conservation Commission and three more voting members were added to include the chair and vice chair of the State Grazing Advisory Board, and the President of the County Weed Supervisors Association. It also changed the names of the state's SCDs to Conservation Districts (CD). He reported that \$200,000 FY08 ongoing General Funds was appropriated for pass-through for the UACD & Conservation Districts programs; and, \$1 million was moved from the ARDL program fund into the UDAF Rural Rehab program fund.

SCDs/UACD, STATE GRAZING ADVISORY BOARD & STATE WEED PROGRAM COORDINATION

SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS REPORT

Mr. Bill Rasmussen felt that the group effort between the SCD Supervisors and UACD speaking to their legislators helped in getting the Land & Water Reinvestment Act passed. He reported that SCD Supervisor training UACD held in January was well attended and effective. Each of the seven SCD zones will be holding their annual zone conference in March.

Mr. Gordon Younker reported that Utah is hosting the National Association of Conservation Districts Southwest and Pacific Regions Conference, September 9-10 in Park City. UACD's proposed budget for the next fiscal is \$2.4 million. Half of UACD's budget comes from the State legislature and ARDL pass-through appropriations via contracts with USCC/UDAF; the other half comes from contracts and grants with other conservation partners mainly our Federal agency partners. An additional UACD professional position was funded by the state legislature for a FY08 conservation planner in the Box Elder county districts. NRCS is UACD's partner for providing office facilities, vehicles and technical assistance training for most of UACD & conservation district employees. There is a new watershed coordinator in the Uintah Basin area and new secretarial staff for the SCDs. Mr. Younker introduced Mr. Kerry Van Dyke as the UACD new civil engineer that will help with technical assistance statewide on projects needing engineering.

STATE GRAZING ADVISORY BOARD REPORT

Mr. Jay Tanner reported the state's UDAF five regional grazing advisory boards have met over the past month to prioritize and allocated \$500,000 FY07 funds for grazing improvement project grant applications that will be underway this spring. A Grazing Improvement Program (GIP) leadership established a technical committee that will help advise the state and regional boards on future GIP projects.

STATE WEED COMMITTEE & CO. WEED SUP. ASSOC.

Mr. Steve Burningham reported that the new State of Utah Noxious Weed Strategic Plan has been published. It was available at the Annual Weed Conference held in February. He reported that there was a good turnout at the Annual Weed Conference meeting. In 2006-2007 fiscal year (FY07), UDAF had \$150,000 grant funds allocated for weed control efforts across the state. There were contracts awarded to 15 of the state's Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMAs) totaling \$147,000, with \$3,000 held for emergency needs. Four of the contracts have been completed. The remaining contracts must be completed by September 30. One of the projects funded was for 150,000 acres of Square Rose Knapweed in the Tintic area. Other projects funded are biological control of Musk Thistle and Tamarisk, spraying for Goats Root, Whitetop and Yellow Star Thistle. There have been 13 grant applicants received for FY08, with 23 different proposals listed. The amount of the applications so far is \$219,687. The State Weed Committee is now reviewing those proposals for funding allocation. Every year the counties must submit an annual report outlining their weed control programs and the budget for those programs to UDAF. So far, 17 counties have reported their budgets, which combined equals \$2,408,000. It is estimated that the counties will spend 3.5 million on weed control this year.

USCC & SCD ITEMS

AGRICULTURE RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT LOAN (ARDL) PROGRAM ACTION

Mr. Richard Sandberg, UDAF Loan Programs Administrator, reported on the ARDL program status as of February 28, 2007. The total Legislative appropriation is \$18,368,180. The principal balance of loans is \$18,620,892, with \$2,157,966 in undisbursed funds, totaling \$20,778,858. There are 723 contracted loans, and 77 active applications. The average loan size is \$28,740. There were 17 loans 30 days past due. Principal repayments year to date are \$2,946,199., interest payments are \$476,079., penalty payments are \$10,099., totaling \$3,432,377. There have been, 81 loans paid off and 77 new loans, at a total of \$3,220,981. The average new loan size is \$41,831. \$123,884 was paid to UACD in TA fees.

There is \$830,208 in the ARDL bank account, and \$9,580,469 in the investment account. There is \$2,157,966 in undisbursed loans. There is \$4,113,397 in loan applications in process and \$3,713,202 in zone allocations, totaling \$7,826,599.

Mr. Sandberg reported on one loan that was approved previously by the Commission's ARDL Loan Approval Committee. The loan is for J.A. Watson Family Limited partnership. The amount is for \$237,593 for cost overrun as the result of additional cost for a well. This is a policy exception since the first lien balance of \$201,193 exceeds twice the size of the new loan request.

USCC & SCD ADMINISTRATIVE PROGRAMS UPDATE & ACTION

Mr. Jake Jacobson discussed a handed data table that listed three years of past USCC funds use, current fiscal year budget and the proposed FY08 budget for the Utah Conservation Commission. **A motion to accept the proposed FY08 budget was made by Mr. Paul Leishman, seconded by Mr. Dee Waldron. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

FY08 USCC TA PROJECT GRANT FY09 POLICY & GUIDELINES; & FY08 GRANT ALLOCATION

Mr. Jake Jacobson reported on a USCC Executive Committee conference call review of the Commission's Technical Assistance (TA) Project Grant program policy and guidelines revision effort. There were concerns expressed at the October 2006 USCC meeting that the current needs and use practices of the TA grant program are in conflict with the program policies and guidelines. A committee was named at that meeting to be composed of three UACD Zone Coordinators and Jake Jacobson to discuss the issue and recommend possible revisions to the program policies. The USCC Executive Committee reviewed the Zone Coordinators' report and discussed the recommendation's likely short and long term impacts to the TA grant program. The major element of concern of the program was the guideline that would discontinue funding a project after five years. The intent of this timeframe is to have grantees seek more long term funding from other sources for needed projects that will last more than five years. The Committee recommendations to the USCC for consideration is to postpone further action on the TA Project Grant program policy revision for at least a year until the committee and UACD board has time to further evaluate the short and long term affects of the Zone Coordinators committee recommended adjustments. In the meantime the program should go forward for FY08 under the current policy as determined in the January 2007 Commission meeting. **A motion to accept the USCC Executive Committee recommendations for the TA grant program was made by Mr. Randy Greenhalgh, seconded by Mr. Ralph Staheli. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

Mr. Jake Jacobson referred handouts showing the Commission's TA Project Grant program requests for FY08. There was one application for statewide technical assistance that per program policy required Commission action. This was for the Nature High Camp support for \$5,000 from this grant program for their 2007 year. Nature High Summer Camp was established to introduce and educate Utah high school students about natural resources and science career opportunities. San Rafael CD will partner with BOR, BLM, NRCS, USGS and other CDs to host the camp next year. The Commission's Executive Committee had reviewed this request in detail and recommended funding it at \$2,800.00 with some conditions listed in the committee's minutes that were provided. **A motion to approve the statewide Technical Assistance grant for Nature High Summer Camp for \$2,800.00 was made by Mr. Paul Leishman, seconded by Mr. Dee Waldron. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.** The balance of the FY08 TA Project Grant program allocation would according to current policy be divided equally among the seven CDs zones to be allocated to the CDs in their zone who had submitted an application. This would result in \$11,600.00 being available for each zone. After the Zone Executive Committee (ZEC) allocations the amount going to applicable CDs would be included in their FY08 funding contract.

SET 2008 CD SUPERVISORS ELECTION DATES & PROCEDURES

Mr. Jake Jacobson referred a proposed list of dates of the 2008 Conservation District (CD) Supervisor election. By statute the Commission sets the dates prior to an election. The elections are conducted biennially under direction of the Utah Conservation Commission with staff and funding support from the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. There will be 3 supervisor positions in each of the 38 Conservation Districts up for

election in 2008. **A motion to approve the suggested date for the 2008 Conservation District Supervisor election as proposed by staff was made by Mr. Ed Bench, seconded by Mr. Bob Barry. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.**

CONSERVATION PARTNER'S UPDATE

SCD/ZONES 2 & 5

Zones 2 and 5 passed out written reports showing the goals and accomplishments for their zones over the past twelve months.

TIMELY OR URGENT ITEMS FROM UTAH PCD DIRECTORS

Ms. Lisa Bryant, Utah Bureau of Land Management reported that February 2, 2007 BLM and USFS announced the 2007 Federal Grazing Fees. The fee will be \$1.35 per animal unit month, the lowest in several years. Utah BLM is seeking nominations for the Resource Advisory Council. This is a 15 member citizen's council that helps guide BLM in addressing resource issues of concern on public lands throughout the state. These are 3 year volunteer appointments and there are five positions available. The Department of Interior announces its Healthy Lands Initiative. The President's 2008 budget requests a substantial increase of \$15 million in funding for the BLM to implement the initiative in six specific geographic areas including Utah, which will get \$2 million. BLM is updating its Watershed Initiative informational displays to reflect accomplishments of the last couple of years. The plan is to have the updated displays completed in time for use at the International Sportsmen's Exposition to be held March 15-18 in Salt Lake City. March 27, 2007, BLM is planning a coordination meeting for all field office staff working on watershed initiative projects.

Mr. Todd Nielson, Natural Resource Conservation Service, reported the next State Technical meeting will be 10:00 am, April 12 in Price, or can be accessed via the web.

CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

UtahPCD Directors Council Regular Meeting: following this meeting
Balance 2007 UCC Meetings: June 6 Escalante and November 7 in St. George
2007 UT Water Users Workshop: March 6-7 in St. George
2007 UT Conservation Field Day: June 7 in Canyonlands SCD (Escalante area)
NACD WS/Pacific Regional Meeting: Nov 8-9, 2007 Park City (Hosted by UACD)
2007 UACD/UtahPCD Annual Convention/Conference: Nov 8-9 in St. George Dixie Center

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Mr. Bill Rasmussen to adjourn this meeting, seconded by Mr. Paul Leishman. The motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Meeting adjourned 2:13 p.m. Commissioner Blackham invited those present to stay if they wished for the Utah Partners for Conservation & Development Directors Council meeting.

Sherie Edginton, Conservation Program Secretary

K.N. "Jake" Jacobson, USCC Administrative Officer